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A tangled web

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive!" — Sir Walter Scott

The tangled webs of deceit evolve into enormous spider-traps of complexity, beyond human unravelment, as governments engage in covert political warfare and operations. So has it been; so shall it be.

Small wonder, thus, that the Central Intelligence Agency can conclude with "99 percent certainty" that the Bulgarian government knew in advance of the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II.

Equally small is the inescapable conclusion that the CIA can be convinced that neither the Bulgarians nor the Soviet Union instituted the attack by Turkish terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca. Nobody, but nobody, should or must be able to disentangle the web to lead to the seat of government or into its middle echelons if any

covert operation is properly weft.

Naturally, as the CIA concludes, the Bulgarian intelligence figures knew Agea was bent on killing the pope but "regarded him as an unstable person who probably would be captured." In short, the plot would drift awry.

One source properly summarizes, "The CIA conclusion makes the Bulgarians — and by extension the Soviets, who control the Bulgarians — accessories before the fact. It dilutes their guilt, but not very much."

Proof of Bulgarian-Soviet complicity would have scrubbed any meeting between President Reagan and Soviet leader Yuri B. Andropov, boss of the KGB when the Pope was shot. The meeting's still on. No direct links ever will emerge between the Kremlin and the dastardly attempt to murder a Pope from Poland, interested in the freedom of his people. So the web's entanglement remains, *ad infinitum*.